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cont.

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79. A drainage/dewatering aid comprising the polysilicate microgel of claim

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80. The aqueous polysilicate microgel of claim 47, further comprising an organic polymer.

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81. The aqueous polysilicate microgel of claim 47, further comprising an amount of aqueous solution or suspension effective to dilute the aqueous polysilicate microgel. - -

### REMARKS

This preliminary amendment of the specification and claims is submitted to more clearly cover the scope of the invention.

The specification supports the new claims. Support for the combination of (i) an aqueous solution of alkali metal silicate with (ii) an aqueous phase of silica-based material having a pH of 11 or less and (iii) an organic acid, in claims 36-44, 47-57 and 76-81, page 2, ll. 10-19, and page 5, l. 27-page 6, l. 19. The specific recitations of dependent claims 37-43 and 48-54 are supported on page 6, ll. 11-19, of the specification. The specific recitations of dependent claims 44-45 and 55-56 are supported on page 6, l. 20-page 7, l. 6, of the specification. The specific recitations of dependent claims 46 and 57 are supported on page 7, ll. 23-24, of the specification. The specific recitations of dependent claims 58, 60, 64, 66, 70, 72, 76 and 78 are supported on page 7, l. 6, of the specification. The specific recitations of dependent claims 59, 63, 65, 69, 71, 75, 77 and 81 are supported on page 7, ll. 10-11, of the specification. The specific recitations of dependent claims 61, 67, 73 and 79 are supported on page 8, l. 12-page 9, l. 8,

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of the specification. The specific recitations of dependent claims 62, 68, 74 and 80 are supported on page 7, ll. 27-32, of the specification.

Early and favorable consideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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